

Federal Requirement for the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP)

For the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)

Each of the 14 outcome areas or systemic factors found to be in nonconformance during the CFSR review must be addressed in the PEP. The final federal CFSR report received approximately 30 days after the end of the on-site review identifies the specific issues that must be addressed in the PEP. The federal regulation at 45 CFR 1355.35(a) requires states to include certain information in the PEP and there is a recommended format for states to use in developing the PEP.

Following receipt of the federal report, states have 90 days to submit the PEP document. The PEP document is reviewed by the ACF regional office and typically states and the ACF regional office spend several months working on refining the improvement strategies and setting specific measurable goals. Once the PEP is approved, states have a two-year period to implement the program improvements. States are required to submit quarterly status reports to the ACF regional office on progress in implementing the PEP. The quarterly reports must include data showing progress on the measurable goals.

The PEP document consists of four components: (1) a general information section with key contact information, (2) a written work plan detailing the work to be undertaken in the PEP, (3) an agreement form indicating approval of the PEP by the ACF regional office and the state, and (4) a tracking matrix that summarizes the components of the PEP initially and permits tracking of progress and completion dates through quarterly status reports.

The following information is required content for the PEP:

- The PEP must include a measurable goal of improvement, action steps, and timeframe for addressing each outcome area found not to be in substantial conformity. Specifically, the PEP must address the on-site performance indicators (items) and statewide aggregate data that contributed to the low achievement level of that outcome, as noted in the final report.
- The PEP must include a specific percentage of improvement (goal) that will be achieved through the PEP for each statewide aggregate data indicator that does not meet the national standards. If the amount of progress to be achieved through the PEP does not reach the established national standards, the amount negotiated between the ACF regional office and the state must be significant enough to move the state toward conformance with the national standards in a reasonable period of time.
- The PEP must include a measurable goal of improvement, action steps, and a timeframe for addressing each systemic factor found not to be in substantial conformity. The PEP must address the federal requirements that contributed to a determination of nonconformity for each systemic factor, as noted in the final federal report.

Prepared by:
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Children and Family Services
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- The PEP should identify the individuals or parties responsible for undertaking each action step.
- The PEP must specify the geographic areas of the State in which the action steps will be undertaken and an explanation of how the plan will lead to positive outcomes and adequate functioning of the systemic factors statewide, if needed
- The PEP must present a plan for evaluating the implementation of the provisions of the PEP, including benchmarks of progress and other evidence that goals have been achieved.
- The PEP must describe the State's plan for accessing technical assistance through the federally-funded national resource centers to support program improvements (for each outcome and systemic factor).

If the PEP is not approved by the federal government, or if the state fails to meet the improvement goals outlined in the PEP, financial penalties can be imposed on the state. The financial penalties apply separately to each of the 14 outcome areas and systemic factors. The amount of the penalties grow if the outcome area/systemic factor remains in non-conformance in subsequent CFSR reviews.

States must incorporate elements of the PEP into the goals and objectives of the Child and Family Services Plan for federal Title IV-B and CAPTA funds and address state progress in implementing the PEP in the Annual Progress and Services Report portion of the state plan.

States are expected to coordinate the PEP with the Court Improvement Plan program.

Note: The Wisconsin term Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) is the same as the federal term Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

Division of Children and Family Services
Federal requirements for CFSR PEP - v2

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